



**Public Hearing Testimony of
Sharon Palmer, Commissioner
Department of Labor
Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
March 11, 2014**

Good Morning Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher and Representative LeGeyt and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with written testimony regarding **Senate Bill No. 400, AAC Connecticut's Manufacturing and Technology Workforce**. My name is Sharon Palmer and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Labor.

I oppose this bill as it refers to apprenticeship. The term "apprentice" has a specific definition under state and federal law. An apprentice is an individual who is employed by a sponsor under a program approved by the Department of Labor. The inclusion of the term "apprentice" in this proposed bill runs afoul of both state and federal law.

The proposed bill seeks to allow apprentices to go to school two days a week and work three days a week. The apprenticeship program in Connecticut requires apprentices to have full-time employment as an apprentice, and changing that requirement would undermine the apprenticeship program as there must be an employer/employee relationship.

The only nationally recognized credential for apprenticeship for state and federal purposes is the Certificate of Completion issued from the apprenticeship office in one of the 50 states. There is no registered apprenticeship program that can legally be conducted in less than 2,000 hours with 144 hours of related classroom instruction. Most manufacturing apprenticeships last for 3 to 4 years; (4,000 to 6,000 work hours and 432 to 576 hours of school).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today.